

CLAIMS

1. A utility vehicle comprising:
 - a frame supporting at least three ground-engaging wheels;
 - an engine supported by virtue of the frame;
 - a drive assembly for one or more of the ground-engaging wheels;
 - a continuously variable transmission unit in operative engagement with the engine and supported by operation of the frame;
 - a housing of said continuously variable transmission, said housing including a peripheral wall positioned between opposing members and transmission components therewithin, said housing having an inlet therinto and an outlet therefrom, wherein at least a selected one of said inlet and said outlet is disposed at a position along said peripheral wall; and
 - a fan unit positioned in operative fluid-passing relationship with the inlet to the housing, said fan unit impelling ambient air into the housing so as to impart a positive pressure within the housing and develop an air flow out of said housing through at least the outlet port of the housing, thereby minimizing risk of intrusion into the housing of moisture, dust and/or dirt.
2. The utility vehicle of claim 1, wherein both of said inlet and said outlet are disposed at positions along said peripheral wall.
3. The utility vehicle of claim 1, said peripheral wall further including an upper portion, wherein at least a selected one of said inlet and said outlet is disposed at a position along the upper portion of said peripheral wall.
4. The utility vehicle of claim 3, wherein both of said inlet and said outlet are disposed at positions along said upper portion of said peripheral wall.

5. The utility vehicle of claim 1, wherein said housing, said inlet, and said outlet define a generally longitudinal enclosed air flow path between said inlet and said outlet.
6. The utility vehicle of claim 5, wherein said inlet and outlet are at generally opposing end portions of the housing.
7. The utility vehicle of claim 1, wherein said inlet and said outlet are positioned so that the fan unit imparts positive pressure throughout substantially the entire housing.
8. The utility vehicle of claim 5, wherein said air flow path crosses all of the transmission components within the housing.
9. The utility vehicle of claim 1, said fan unit further including a filter for preventing ingress of outside particulates.
10. The utility vehicle of claim 1, said fan unit further including a power line, wherein said power line provides power to said fan, said power line operating independently of said transmission components.
11. The utility vehicle of claim 10, further including an oil pressure monitoring unit, wherein the power line is operatively coupled to said oil pressure monitoring unit.
12. The utility vehicle of claim 1, said outlet further including an air exhaust hose associated with said outlet for directing air away from said housing enclosure.
13. A utility vehicle comprising:
 - a frame supporting at least three ground-engaging wheels;
 - an engine supported by virtue of the frame;
 - a drive assembly for one or more of the ground-engaging wheels;
 - a continuously variable transmission unit in operative engagement with the engine and supported by operation of the frame;
 - a housing of said continuously variable transmission, said housing including transmission components therewithin,

said housing having an upstream portion, a downstream portion, an inlet thereinto disposed at the upstream portion of said housing, and an outlet therefrom disposed at the downstream portion of said housing; and

a fan unit positioned in operative fluid-passing relationship with the inlet to the housing, said fan unit impelling ambient air into the housing so as to impart a positive pressure within the housing and develop an air flow in a generally longitudinal direction from said upstream portion to said downstream portion and out of said housing through at least the outlet port of the housing, thereby minimizing risk of intrusion into the housing of moisture, dust and/or dirt.

14. The utility vehicle of claim 13, wherein said inlet and said outlet are positioned so that the fan unit imparts positive pressure throughout substantially the entire housing.

15. The utility vehicle of claim 13, wherein said housing, said inlet, and said outlet define a generally longitudinal enclosed air flow path between said inlet and said outlet.

16. The utility vehicle of claim 15, wherein said air flow path crosses all of the transmission components within the housing.

17. The utility vehicle of claim 13, said fan unit further including a power line, wherein said power line provides power to said fan, said power line operating independently of said transmission components.

18. A method of creating positive air pressure within a continuously variable transmission housing containing a belt which is rotatable in a plane, comprising:

providing an inlet and an outlet associated with said housing;

impelling air into said housing through the inlet in a direction disposed at an acute angle with respect to said

plane, thereby imparting positive pressure throughout substantially the entire housing; and

exhausting air from said housing through the outlet, thereby regulating the positive pressure within the housing.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the direction is parallel to said plane.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the inlet is disposed within said plane.